

414th BSB – Büdingen, Hanau



Jocelyn Townsend (right) shares a laugh with soldiers during deployment to Kosovo in 2001. The Hanau Red Cross assistant station manager is deploying to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Red Cross civilian deploys to Kuwait

Townsend to staff field office, transmit emergency messages

By Melody Joy Fields
414th Base Support Battalion Public Affairs Office

Soldiers aren't the only people deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. More and more civilians work on or near the battlefields providing critical assistance to service members.

Jocelyn Townsend, assistant station manager for the Hanau Red Cross is deploying to Kuwait to help operate the field office.

"It's part of our job," said Townsend. "We're mobile, and when you take on the job, they say you can be deployed."

Get the word out

A field office's primary mission is to supply emergency communication messages to deployed service members and other civilians working with the military. Those messages usually communicate births, deaths or illnesses of immediate family members back home.

"That's the core of our job," said Townsend. "Usually they have deployed sites set up and they rotate people in or out when a crisis or something like this happens. Because of the mass movement, they needed extra help."

Townsend volunteered for the mission to the Gulf region.

In addition to providing emergency communications, "We also do some morale work," said Townsend. "Usually we have an office set up to give out coffee, cookies and candy to give the soldiers a little touch of home. And we do visit service members when we can in the outlying areas."

"We'd go to outlying areas to find out what they wanted. We get donations of cookies, candy, movies, books, shampoo, crackers and the like. And we throw parties too, little morale boosters," she said.

Townsend deployed to Kosovo in 2001,

so she's familiar with field work. "It'll be long hours. When the messages come in, we have to deliver them. Over there we're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I know when I was in Kosovo, we were probably getting 80-100 messages a week."

Townsend expects those numbers will be much higher in Kuwait where more service members are stationed. The Kuwait field office is in a minimized condition and is accepting messages only pertaining to immediate family members.

"Some of the phone lines are down," said Townsend. "Email is sometimes down, so they're just trying to get out the priority messages for the immediate families. Anyone can call, but the message has to be about immediate family — mom, dad, brother, sister, spouse and children."

"Health and welfare messages won't go through. If it's about an ID card, that won't go through. It has to be a critical need," she said.

Townsend urged patience for family members sending a message to service members.

"It takes a few days even here in Germany sometimes. With all that's going on over there, it's a little difficult to find them. Some of them left home without their family members knowing where they were going — because of their mission, they couldn't tell their families. But we do have people who can track them down."

Townsend said she is eager to start her mission.

"I'm excited that I get to go again. I really do think that this is the core of our job," she said. "We're right there with the service member. They come into the office where they can talk to you, relax, kick back. They're so far removed from having somebody who's not in the military, that a civilian is a pleasant change. They don't have to salute us or be on their toes."

Unit watch

Editor's note: Below are two messages from units deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The first is from the 18th Military Police Brigade, the second from Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 709th MP Battalion.

To the family members and loved ones of the soldiers of the 18th Military Police Brigade,

Your loved ones are performing magnificently. They have quickly adapted to austere conditions, overcome blinding sandstorms, much less not getting those home cooked meals. Despite all the hardships, their morale remains high and they are focused on the mission ahead.

I can tell you they are prepared and ready to accomplish any mission given to each and every person. They have answered every task with a positive attitude and have set the standard for other units to try and match. You too can be proud of the way your loved one has tirelessly worked to accomplish our mission of removing the Iraqi regime and present the gift of freedom to the Iraqi people.

I also want to thank you for your sacrifice during Operation Iraqi Freedom. I fully understand what you and your soldier are giving up during this trying deployment, but your continuing love and support gives them renewed strength each and every day.

Mail call has become the highlight of the day and you should see how their faces light up when a letter or package is handed to them. There is no way to measure the positive impact of the support you provide these soldiers.

Without you there is no us.

To the friends and families of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 709th MP Battalion,

Although the weather is tough and food/amenities aren't the best, everyone's doing well and morale is pretty high. Despite the very long days and sheer volume of work to do, people are really coming together as a team. This is perhaps one benefit of having deployed so soon after coming back from Kosovo. There is a sense of camaraderie, of accomplishing something together. And there's the knowledge that because we've been together for as long as we have and through all the things we've been through, that we are here for one another — for support, to talk and listen to. We miss our families and friends terribly. They are never, ever out of our thoughts, but we take some comfort in the fact that we do have an important mission to perform and we have each other to lean on when things get tough.

We work and sleep in the same tent. We have between 16 and 18 to a tent right now. Space is at a premium and there are lots of people here. There is a chow hall that serves two hot meals, breakfast and dinner, per day. Lunch is an MRE. If they get the other chow hall set up again, that'll cut the wait to about 20 minutes. There's also a small gym tent, but its equipment isn't the best. There are showers on occasion, but water and time are limited.

There are six phones available. The wait to use one is usually over two hours. The engineer units from Hanau are here, so we're seeing some familiar faces from Germany. Many old and familiar faces are popping up and people are catching up with old friends. It's been a good thing.



Blowin' in the wind

A 16th Corps Support Command soldier makes his way across a Kuwaiti encampment area during a sandstorm. The winds were so strong at times that soldiers had to hold tent poles in place to keep them from collapsing.



Bulletin board

At the movies April 1-17

Baumholder, Wagon Wheel

April 1 — National Security (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 2-3 — Just Married (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 4-6 — Cradle 2: The Grave (R) 7 p.m.
April 7-8 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 9-10 — Star Trek: Nemesis (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 11-13 — Tears Of The Sun (R) 7 p.m.
April 14-15 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 16-17 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.

Büdingen, Little

April 4 — Antwone Fisher (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 5 — Catch Me If You Can (PG-13) 3 p.m.
April 11 — Just Married (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 12 — National Security (PG-13) 3 p.m.

Dexheim, Rhein

April 4 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 5 — Tears Of The Sun (R) 7 p.m.
April 6 — Treasure Planet (PG) 3 p.m.
April 11 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 12 — The Hunted (R) 7 p.m.
April 13 — Shrek (PG) 3 p.m.

Friedberg, Old Ironsides

April 3 — Catch Me If You Can (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 4 — Old School (R) 7 p.m.
April 5 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 6 — Old School (R) 7 p.m.
April 10 — National Security (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 11 — Cradle 2: The Grave (R) 7 p.m.
April 12 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 7 p.m.
April 13 — National Security (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 17 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.

Giessen, Skyline

April 1-2 — Daredevil (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 4 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 5 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 7 p.m.
April 6 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 8-9 — Old School (R) 7 p.m.
April 11 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.
April 12 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 13 — Narc (R) 7 p.m.
April 15-16 — Cradle 2: The Grave (R) 7 p.m.

Hanau, Evening Star

April 1 — Just Married (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 2 — National Security (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 3 — Just Married (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 4 — Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m. A Guy Thing



Tom Sizemore (left) and Morgan Freeman star in the thriller, "Dreamcatcher."

(PG-13) 9:30 p.m.
April 5 — Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m. Kangaroo Jack (PG) 9:30 p.m.
April 6 — Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m.
April 7 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 8 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 7 p.m.
April 9 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 10 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 7 p.m.
April 11 — The Core (PG-13) 7 p.m. Darkness Falls (R) 9:30 p.m.
April 12 — The Core (PG-13) 7 p.m. Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 9:30 p.m.
April 13 — The Core (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 14 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 15 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.
April 16 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 17 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.

Rhein Main, Gardens

April 2 — The Hunted (R) 7 p.m.
April 4 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 5 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 5 p.m. Drumline (PG-13) 7:30 p.m.
April 6 — Cradle 2: The Grave (R) 7 p.m.
April 9 — Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m.
April 11 — Tears Of The Sun (R) 7 p.m.
April 12 — Darkness Falls (R) 5 p.m. Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7:30 p.m.
April 13 — Narc (R) 7 p.m.
April 16 — The Core (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Wackernheim, McCully

April 2 — Tears Of The Sun (R) 7 p.m.
April 9 — The Hunted (R) 7 p.m.
April 16 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.

Wiesbaden, Flyers

April 3 — The Hunted (R) 7 p.m.
April 4 — Just Married (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 5 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 10 — Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m.
April 11 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.
April 12 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 17 — The Core (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Wiesbaden, Taunus

April 1 — Tears Of The Sun (R) 7 p.m.
April 2 — Antwone Fisher (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 3 — National Security (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 4 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m. The Hunted (R) 9:30 p.m.
April 5 — Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Secrets (PG) 3 p.m. The Hunted (R) 7 p.m. A Guy Thing (PG-13) 9:30 p.m.
April 6 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 4 p.m. The Hunted (R) 7 p.m.
April 7 — The Hunted (R) 7 p.m.
April 8 — Kangaroo Jack (PG) 7 p.m.
April 9 — A Guy Thing (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 10 — Just Married (PG-13) 7 p.m.
April 11 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m. Dreamcatcher (R) 9:30 p.m.
April 12 — Shrek (PG) 4 p.m. Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m. Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 9:30 p.m.
April 13 — Treasure Planet (PG) 4 p.m. Narc (R) 7 p.m.
April 14 — Dreamcatcher (R) 7 p.m.
April 15 — Darkness Falls (R) 7 p.m.
April 16 — Narc (R) 7 p.m.
April 17 — Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) 7 p.m.

Movies and times subject to change by local theaters. For the most up-to-date schedule visit the ASG's website (see address below).

Movie plots

Confessions Of A Dangerous Mind (R) — Television made him famous, but his biggest hits happened off screen. Focused on a top career in the television industry, Chuck Barris finds himself lured into the secret world of the CIA. As Barris basks in the glamour of two worlds — entertainment and espionage — his life spirals out of control. Stars Sam Rockwell as Chuck Barris.

Dreamcatcher (R) — Jonesy, Henry, Pete and Beaver were just kids in a small town in Maine when they found the courage to save a strange boy named Duddits. In doing so they gained a new friend and uncanny powers. Now the four are men with separate lives and problems. When they reunite for an annual visit to a hunting cabin in the north woods they are overtaken by doom and must face a deadly alien force.

The Hunted (R) — L.T. Bonham (Tommy Lee Jones) and Aaron Hallam (Benicio Del Toro) square off in this story about a mentor and his student who has gone over the edge. Hired to track down his former student, an AWOL Special Forces soldier who has taken to killing hunters, Jones wrestles with the knowledge that it was he who taught Del Toro to kill in the first place.

Antwone Fisher (PG-13) — A sailor with an explosive attitude, Fisher (Derek Luke) is ordered to see a naval psychiatrist (Denzel Washington) about his volatile temper. With the support of the doctor, who becomes more like a father than anyone Fisher has ever known, and a woman (Joy Bryant) he learns to love, Fisher finds the courage to stop fighting and start healing.

Pinocchio (G) — Glenn Close, John Cleese, Queen Latifah, Jim Belushi and Eric Idle lend their voices to a calvacade of fairy tale characters in this live action version of the classic story of a wooden boy who longs to be a real boy. Robert Benigni stars as the "son" of Gepetto and directed the movie.

Catch Me If You Can (PG-13) — Frank Abagnale Jr. (Leonardo Di Caprio) became the most successful bank robber in the history of the United States. FBI Agent Carl Hanratty (Tom Hanks) sets out to capture Frank and bring him to justice.

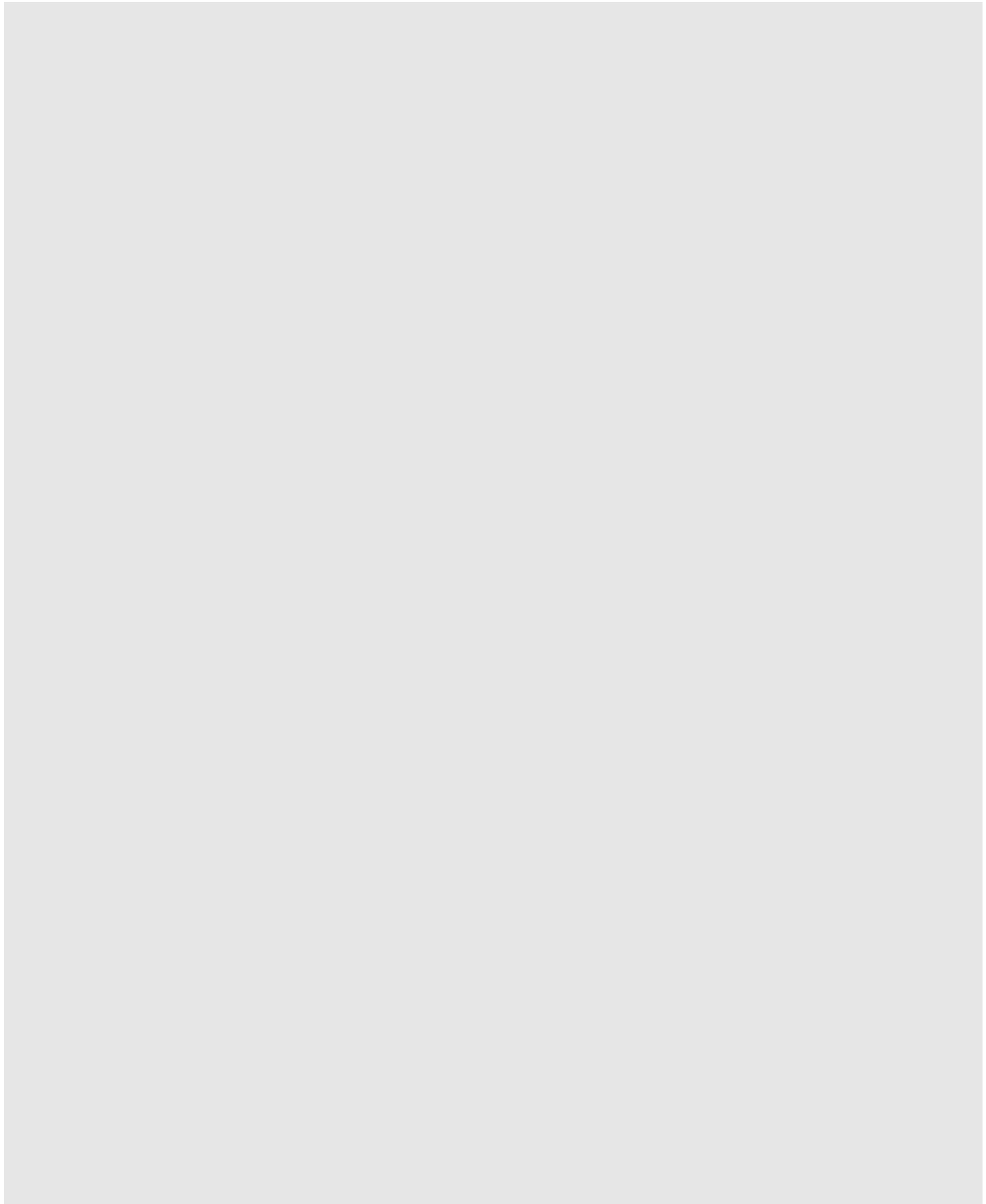
Tears Of The Sun (R) — Navy SEAL Lt. A.K. Waters (Bruce Willis) and his elite squadron of specialists are forced to choose between following orders or helping protect innocent refugees. When the government of Nigeria collapses and the country is taken over by a dictator, Waters is dispatched to retrieve Doctors Without Borders physician Dr. Lena Kendricks (Monica Bellucci). Kendricks refuses to leave unless Waters promises to help deliver the villagers to political asylum at the nearby border.

National Security (PG-13) — Earl (Martin Lawrence) and Hank (Steve Zahn) have only one thing in common — they're both L.A.P.D. rejects. One just got kicked out, the other can't even get in. After confronting each other on opposite sides of the law during a traffic stop, the two luckless individuals end up partnered as lowly security guards where they uncover a sophisticated smuggling ring.



Benicio Del Toro (right) battles Tommy Lee Jones in "The Hunted."

Herald Union classifieds



Sports and leisure

Rüdesheim: Wander in ancient footsteps through vineyards, museums, German history

"From wine what sudden friendship springs" — 17th century poet John Gay

"Bronze is the mirror of the form; wine of the heart" — 5th century B.C. Greek playwright Aeschylus

"Wine should be taken in small doses; knowledge in large ones" — Chinese proverb

Story and photos by Karl Weisel
104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

As spring coaxes crocuses out of the soil and birds to sing passionately, it also encourages tourists to once again hit the trails through vineyards along the Rhein River. While vintners take up their positions in fields high over the river cultivating the vines for the coming fruit, wanderers discover new paths and noteworthy sights to explore.

Even though Rüdesheim may be one of the most oft visited towns in the Rhein River Valley between Mainz and Koblenz, it remains a tourist mecca for good reason. With its host of wine cellars and restaurants, knickknack shops and museums, all squeezed in among narrow passageways ascending the hill below vineyards as far as the eye can see, Rüdesheim offers something for everyone.

Whether you start early in the day to hike up through the vineyards into the Niederwald, arrive late in the day for an afternoon cable car ride or simply stop by for a meal and a glass of the local grape, you'll find plenty of opportunities to learn more about the local culture and to meet international visitors from around the globe while enjoying a view straight out of the guidebooks.

Lofty cable car ride

Children, especially, will enjoy a ride on the two-person cable cars which transport visitors up from the town to the Niederwald Denkmal — a 38-meter-high monument depict-



Two-person cable cars transport visitors over the vineyards from the town of Rüdesheim up to the Niederwald Denkmal and forest. From there one can visit several local sights, go hiking or travel by cable car to the town of Assmannshausen.

ing the mythical figure Germania holding the imperial crown. The monument, visible from many miles away in the valley, was built from 1877 to 1883 and pays tribute to the re-establishment of the German Empire in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War.

From the monument one has several choices for exploration. Families may want to visit the Adlerwarte — a bird sanctuary for large hunting birds. The sanctuary was established by Karl Gilles in 1968 as a home for injured birds and a nursery for owls. Visitors are treated to a show of falconry and a close up look at some 25 different kinds of hunting birds. Entrance is €3.50 for adults, €2.50 for children up to age 14 and €7.50 for a family ticket.

Trails into the Niederwald take one to various other sights including a hunting lodge with a game preserve and views of the Rhein River Valley. Another cable car farther along takes one down into the nearby village of Assmannshausen. Or one can hike back around through the vineyards to the historic Castle Ehrenfels which overlooks the treacherous shallows known as the Binger Loch (Bingen Hole) and which served as a customs station along the river in the Middle Ages.

Pack a picnic lunch

Packing a picnic lunch is recommended for those who may want to dine al fresco with a grand view of the surrounding countryside. If you want to wash it down with a sampling of the local grape, you'll have no trouble finding a wide assortment in Rüdesheim.



A pair of swans enjoys a late afternoon paddle through a small marina by the nearby Rhein River town of Winkel. Winkel, like Rüdesheim, is also renowned for its many wine-tasting establishments and restaurants.



Tourists and hikers enjoy the view of the Rhein River Valley from the Niederwald Denkmal, a symbol of German unity.

Visitors can also hike across up the Koster Weg to visit St. Hildegard's Abbey, a Benedictine community of some 56 nuns. Named in honor of Hildegard of Bingen, a local saint who lived from 1098-1179, the abbey was built early last century, but it traces its roots to its namesake's old convent of Eibingen. The abbey features workshops and a shop selling religious books, icons and other items made by the nuns. Those in search of spiritual comfort may wish to spend more time at the abbey. Rooms are available for €30 (€15 for students) including three meals a day. Call civ (06722) 497 122 for more information.

Those with less inclination to hike through the vineyards may want to visit one of several museums in town. While

Sports and leisure



A guillotine is one of the tamer exhibits on display at the Medieval Museum of Torture and Punishment.

Rüdesheim's Medieval Museum of Torture and Punishment is nowhere near as extensive as its similar cousin in Rothenburg, it provides a somber depiction of the cruelty people were capable of unleashing on their fellow humans in the past and into modern times in the name of justice or religious beliefs.

Exhibits describe how beheading by the sword was a popular amusement until 150 years ago in middle and northern Europe. Displays depict the various tools used by inquisitors, executioners and others to force people to admit to alleged witchcraft or other crimes. After hanging, the most common execution method in central and northern Europe from the beginning of the Middle Ages until the 18th century was to slowly break the victim on the wheel. Like the rack and the stretching ladder, victims were forced to undergo excruciating pain as their bodies were slowly stretched apart, muscles destroyed and bones pulled out of their sockets.

The museum is located at Oberstrasse 49-51, not far from the cable car entrance. Admission is €5 for adults and €3.50 for children.

Medieval castle, museum

Less gruesome museums are located nearby. Those who want to learn more about the wine-making craft can visit the Brömserburg, the oldest castle on the Rhine River. First constructed in 1090, its served as a customs station, was partially destroyed by the invading French army during the 30 Years War and housed prisoners of war during World War II.

It was turned into a museum after the war and rebuilt. Today visitors can examine wine presses, glassware, pottery and learn more about this famous wine region. The museum entrance is located at Rheinstrasse 2. It is open daily.

Other sights include a Museum of Mechanical Musical Instruments in the Brömserhof, 16th-century half-timbered houses and the St. Jakobus Church, which dates back to the 14th century.

For more information about the town and its attractions visit the Rüdesheim website at www.ruedesheim.de/en/index.html.

Sports shorts ... Sports shorts

Softball officials clinic

Hanau Sports will conduct their 2004 Softball Officials and Scorekeepers Clinic April 29 to May 2 at Hanau's Cardwell Fitness Center starting at 6 p.m. each day. Everyone interested in officiating must attend. The clinic will include classroom and practical exercises. A unit-level pre-season softball tournament will be held in conjunction with the clinic May 3-4. Units from the 414th Base Support Battalion interested in participating should contact their local fitness center to register.

Bantam champs

Congratulations to the Hanau/Büdingen bantam basketball team — winners of the 104th Area Support Group Bantam Basketball Championship. The team defeated a Giessen/Butzbach squad 39-38 at the Fliegerhorst Fitness Center March 16 to win the championship. Outstanding players for Hanau/Büdingen were Ronnie Banner and Ben Seftner. Ron King was the top performer for the second place team with 22 points. The Hanau/Büdingen team was coached by Michael Gay and Cedrick McCabe. Juan and Janette Bruno mentored the Giessen/Butzbach players.

Powerlifting meet

Baumholder Sports hosts a Powerlifting Invitational April 5 at the Hall of Champions. Weigh-ins and registration are 8-10 a.m. with the competition starting at 11 a.m. Call mil 485-7176 for details.

Youth clinics, registration

Giessen Youth Services hosts baseball and soccer clinics April 7-11. Cost is \$5. For more information call the YS Sports Office at mil 343-6969 or civ (0641) 402-6969.

Go golfing

Wiesbaden's Rheinblick Golf Course holds a Friday Night Scramble April 25 at 6 p.m. Sign up to participate by 5:30 p.m. Experienced players are teamed with not-so-experienced players in the four-person, select-shot event. Cost is \$10 for members or \$15 for nonmembers. A two-person Best Ball Blickster Golf Tournament will be held April 26 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rheinblick course. Call mil 336-2816 for more information.

Yoga classes

A yoga and stress reduction class is held every Tuesday at 3:45 p.m. in Classroom 3 of Wiesbaden's Aukamm Elementary School. Call mil 337-6261 or civ (0611) 705-6261 for more information.

Races galore

The 284th Base Support Battalion Sports and Fitness Office hosts a five-kilometer run and a three-K family fun walk April 26 at Giessen's Schiffenberg Castle. Registration begins at the castle at 9 a.m. with the run starting at 11 a.m. Call mil 343-8206. The 221st BSB Sports and Fitness Office holds a 10-K Vineyard Fun Run April 26 in Dexheim.

Call mil 334-5746 for details. The 414th BSB hosts 10-K runs at Cardwell Fitness Center May 31, Fliegerhorst Fitness Center June 9 and Büdingen July 4. Call mil 322-9045 for details.

Spring Fling

The 221st Base Support Battalion Sports and Fitness Office hosts a Spring Fitness Fling Aerobathon April 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Tony Bass Fitness Center. Classes include spinning, kickboxing, pilates, jazzercise and more. Other offerings include personal training assessments, massages and pre-enlistment for the Boot Camp Fitness Program. Call mil 337-5379 for details.

Free fitness classes

Giessen's Miller Hall Fitness Center offers free fitness classes. On Tuesdays the center features cardio kickboxing at 5:45 p.m., abdominal training at 6:45 p.m. and spin classes at 7 p.m. A Wednesday power step aerobics class is at 6 p.m. Thursdays feature abdominal training at 5:45 p.m. and spin classes at 6 p.m. For details call mil 343-6384/7201.

Coaches sought

Baumholder Youth Services seeks coaches for all ages and sports. Free training, certification and registration discounts for children will be provided. Call mil 485-7003 for details. Hanau Sports is looking for volunteer coaches to coach the community level men and women softball teams and the track and field team. Call mil 322-9617 or civ (06181) 88-9617.

Galaxy tickets available

Tickets are on sale for the upcoming National Football League-Europe season. While local USO offices will offer tickets as game days draw nearer, fans can also purchase tickets directly from the Frankfurt Galaxy Ticket Hotline at civ (0180) 526 6216 or through the Galaxy website at www.frankfurt-galaxy.de. The Galaxy play home games at the Frankfurt Stadion against Barcelona April 5, versus Berlin April 19, Scotland May 10, Amsterdam May 17 and Düsseldorf June 1.



Photo by Karl Weisel

Galaxy cheerleaders entertain the crowd in Frankfurt during a tribute to the armed forces last year.

Things to do

Comedy Night

The International Club on Hanau's Fliegerhorst Kaserne hosts professional stateside comedians April 26 at 10 p.m. Tickets will be \$10 at the door. Call mil 322-9045.

Paintball in Baumholder

Baumholder Outdoor Recreation organizes paintball games every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$9 with own equipment or \$19 if you want to use theirs. If you'd

rather play your own game, rent a set for \$12 which includes the gun, Co2 tank and hopper. Equipment is also for sale at the Outdoor Rec.

Literary evening

American author Elmaz Abinader will read from her novel "In The Country Of My Dreams" April 3 at 8:30 p.m. at the Romanfabrik at Frankfurt's Hanauer Landstr. 186. Tickets are €5.50.

Steam train rides

The Bad Orb Steam Train operates every Sunday and German holiday starting April 6 through Oct. 26 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Catch a ride at the Bad Orb train station on the hour.

Learning to solve problems key at Smith

By David Ruderman

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Solving problems in everyday situations is the key to educational achievement at Smith Elementary School, said assistant principal Helen Balilo. A school-wide problem-solving day March 21 was a highlight of the academic year so far.

"Parents are always invited to come to Smith Elementary School, but this was a special day," said Balilo. Many spent part of the day with their children and some volunteered to co-teach classes that encouraged students to exercise the four components of problem solving: Understand, Plan, Do and Review, known around Smith by the acronym UPDoctoR.

"It means taking the time to understand a situation," said Balilo. "It's trying to get the students to think about the process and apply it. It's really a life skill." Problem solving day allowed the school's 500 students, preschoolers to sixth-graders, to experience "high level thinking skills in a fun situation," she said.

"Problem solving is a strategy our faculty came up with," said compensatory education teacher and continuous school progress chairperson Scott Finlay. "We're looking at everything. With every type of problem, we have to understand what our situation is and what we're going to do about it. Then we have to do it. Then we look at the results and see how it worked out. It's pretty much like the scientific method."

"It goes across the whole curriculum," said Balilo.

"It can work with reading, looking for information in a passage and seeing what you come up with, whether it answers your question or not," said Finlay. "And it's helpful in the social realm too. We come up with positive solutions, negative solutions and decide what we're going to do. I think the staff has really jumped on this. They've made it really exciting for our kids."

The emphasis on UPDoctoR as a teaching tool resulted from intensive study of students' performance, and its formulation involved contributions from teachers, parents, and the children themselves, said Balilo. In analyzing last year's Terra Nova results the teaching staff identified areas where student skills were strong. Problem solving was elected as a unifying set of higher-level skills to improve weak spots and strengthen overall academic achievement, she said.



Photo by Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

Devante Green (left) and Kayla Hickman select "leveled" books during a special reading session. Smith's new book room lets students select reading material at their specific level.

"This year the entire staff, parents, and the students as well were involved in determining the program. It's whole school improvement," she said.

"Problem solving day came about because part of our action plan involved getting parents involved with their children's education," said Finlay. "Problem solving doesn't just happen in school. We plan to do it four or five times throughout the school year. We want to have families involved and have the time to teach parents about UPDoctoR. Then they can use it at home. We took a risk in our action plan to teach parents about UPDoctoR. I think it's a very worthwhile risk."

Problem solving day opened with an outdoors kick-off ceremony and was followed by two and a half hours of classroom work. Finlay was part of one of several teams that rotated from class to class, engaging students in a variety of fun challenges. He worked with fourth-graders who had to use plastic balls, straws, pins and one sheet of paper to construct a "puff mobile," a breath-driven car. "We give them a certain amount of time and together they have to come up with a puff driven car," he said.

Parents joined their children for the final half hour of school to solve problems together and take home a better understanding

of the technique so they can reinforce its principles on a day-to-day basis.

Balilo, in her first year at Smith, was impressed by the faculty's dedication to the students and their enthusiastic embrace of professional development opportunities to become even better teachers. "One of the greatest things I've seen is a large number of teachers willing to stay after school. You see the change in the way they are teaching. You can see it when you walk through the building. It's having a positive impact on student achievement," she said.

Teachers take advanced educational training after hours to strengthen their teaching skills and earn graduate credits through the University of San Diego.

"We're doing our fourth one right now," said language arts and reading specialist and reading recovery teacher Cheryl Carlson. Topics covered have included interactive writing and editing, and running record analysis. "Running record analysis is an important assessment skill. It gives us a look at what the child needs. This is the specific problem; this is what you do about it. These are strategies, that we call following the child. We learn where each child is at and take them on from there," she said.

"I've been facilitating this, but the teachers are the ones who are driving it," said Carlson. Almost 30 joined each of the first two professional development groups, and more have joined as word got around to teachers at Wetzel and Neubrücke who wanted to participate too. "We've been able to help all the schools, not just ourselves," she said.

"A lot of our programs are what they call acceleration programs. It's not remedial. It's designed to accelerate them to where they're supposed to be. There's a lot of problem solving involved, a lot of collaborative working together," she said.

A newly organized book room with leveled reading materials opened this year, affording children and teachers a greater range of material to work with at specific levels, Carlson said. Pinpointing a child's level and assigning appropriate reading materials go hand in hand to accelerate their development. "That whole combination of professional development and the book room has opened that up," she said.

Carlson and her colleagues also employ the computerized Accelerated Reading program to encourage children to read more. Students choose reading materials, study them and take computer-administered tests to test their comprehension. "The kids love to take those computer tests," said Carlson. "The more they take them the better they do."

Would the joint efforts impact this year's Terra Nova test results? "I think we'll see it

even more next year because this year's been so much involved in setting it up," said Carlson.

"What we have now are standards, and we're teaching to those standards."

"I expect them to do fine," said Balilo. "They are a little more stressed because they're worried about Mom and Dad." Recent deployments and the unsettled crisis in the Gulf have done little to upset the educational process, she said.

"The teachers here are all veterans and have been through deployments before. They're experienced at adapting to these issues. It's not affecting business as usual; doing what is best for our students is part of the everyday routine at Smith," said Balilo.

"It's a family atmosphere here, and I think people have settled down and feel at home. I wouldn't expect many to leave," said Finlay.

Focus on Smith Elementary School



School bits

Make the grade

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service continues to recognize and reward academically proficient sixth-through 12th-graders with savings bonds through its You Made the Grade program. Students with B or better averages can bring their latest report cards to any AAFES exchange to receive a book of coupons worth \$50 toward merchandise purchases and register for the savings bond lottery at the same time. Quarterly drawings will award \$2,000, \$3,000 and \$5,000 savings bonds.

Seminar in Dresden

American students ages 14-18 are invited to attend a German-American Youth Seminar in Dresden May 2-4. The event is organized by the Federation of German-American Clubs and will include tours of the city, a Volkswagen production plant, the Karl May Museum and cross-cultural dialogue. Participation is limited to 20. Reservations must be made by April 11. Call Barbara Klein at civ (0711) 236 8690 or email her at Bklein1003@aol.com for details.

FBLA conference in K-town

The Future Business Leaders of America will host their annual State Leadership Conference at the Dorint Hotel in Kaiserslautern April 16-18. This year's focus will be compe-

tition in business and computer skills. For details call the DoDDS Europe State Chapter at mil 489-7721 or email meleisa_rauton@eu.odedodea.edu.

Thinking ahead to next year

Preregistration for the 2003-2004 school year will begin this month at all Department of Defense Dependents Schools. Registering for the coming school year is critical to proper funding, and parents should make every effort to comply with requirements and scheduling to be announced by their child's school, said officials. The 2003-2004 school year will begin Sept. 2, the day after Labor Day.

